



Home/School Communication

POLICY



Rationale:

The Port Melbourne PS team (Staff, School Council, Parents and Friends Association PFA) encourages engagement of all parents with the school. These relationships are vital to maintaining a positive and productive school community and are essential to student learning and wellbeing. This policy will explain how to best communicate your feedback, requests, questions or concerns and to whom. We aim for all parents to play an active role in the school and your child's school life. This should be your first point of reference when needing to contact the school, so that communication can be as efficient as possible, ensuring the whole community can work effectively as a team.

Aims:

- To improve communication between the school and home.
- To establish appropriate lines of communication between school and home.
- To have a clear understanding of the purpose of each form of communication.
- To establish guidelines for the appropriate use of each form of communication.
- To establish appropriate response times.

Guidelines:

- Port Melbourne PS has a number of platforms for communication. Each one has a slightly different purpose as outlined below:
 - **Compass:** The main form of communication. Through the Compass school portal, staff will upload; excursion/incursion/camp events, learning tasks, reports, upcoming events calendar, student attendance. By using Compass parents can pay and give consent for excursions/incursions online, report their child's absence, book a parent/teacher interview, access their child's learning tasks, reports and attendance and contact their child's teacher via email. Parents can notify the school of their child's absence via Compass.
 - **Konnective:** Used in 2 ways:
 - 1. For reminders to Compass. Konnective updates/events are short and intended to remind parents of any upcoming events. Detailed information of each event is on Compass.
 - 2. For all PFA news and events.
 - **Qkr:** A payment app used when Compass cannot be used. For example this is used for sushi day, as Compass does not allow for multiple purchases.
 - **Newsletter:** Weekly summary of events, reminders for upcoming events and important information from the Principal and School Council President.
 - **Email:** School staff and parents can contact each other at any time of the day.
 - **Phone:** Used when a more immediate response is needed during business hours or for parents to report an absence outside of business hours (automated service). Parents cannot phone teachers directly, all calls are taken via the school administration/office.

Implementation:

School events:

- All school events (Incursions/excursions/camps) that require parent consent and/or payment follow strict guidelines. These guidelines are there to ensure that school staff are highly organised, enabling the events to run smoothly.
- All school events have a 2 day cut-off date. This means that consent and payment is required no later than 2 school days prior to the event. This provides school staff with time to finalise groupings and to cater a learning program for any non-attending students. **No late payments are accepted.**
- All school events are communicated via Compass with a minimum of 3 weeks notice. Some exceptions do occur based on the nature of the event.
- Event reminders are sent via Konnective, one week prior to the event.
- Payment reminders are communicated via Compass on a weekly basis, where required.

Email:

- Parents are welcome to email staff at any time, for any reason.
- Class teachers can be contacted via Compass. The school office will provide email addresses for any other staff, as requested. See Appendix A for further information.
- Teaching staff will respond within 2 school days to any email from a parent.
- Principal class will respond within 1 – 3 school days to any email from a parent.
- School staff are strongly discouraged from reading and responding to emails outside of 8am – 6pm.
- Year level teachers will send home a weekly email, via Compass outlining content being covered and any reminders for the following week. These emails will be sent by close of business on Friday of the preceding week.

Newsletter:

- Available online each Thursday afternoon.
- A Konnective is sent with the link once the newsletter is finalised for the week.
- Any information for the newsletter is due to the Principal by 1pm on Wednesday. Information provided after this time may not be included until the following week.

Phone:

- The school office can be contacted on: 03 9646 1001
- Office hours are 8:30am – 4:30pm.
- An automated service operates outside of these hours. Parents can leave a message, which will be accessed during office hours.
- Individual teachers cannot be contacted directly by phone.
- Any message for a teacher will be forwarded by email, with the email procedures listed above being followed.
- Any urgent message/request for a teacher, for example a child needing to attend after care, will be communicated to the classroom teacher via phone call from the office. This is at the

discretion of the office staff. Please do not email your child's classroom teacher for urgent requests, as we cannot guarantee it will be read in time.

- Teachers will contact parents regarding any concerns the safety and wellbeing of their child by phone or email at their soonest available time.
- Teachers are not permitted to use their classroom phone or personal mobile phone during teaching time. There may be some exceptions to this at the discretion of the Principal class (Principal, Assistant Principals).

Website:

- The school website contains all current policies, weekly newsletters, School Council contact details, termly class overviews and processes for reporting cyber bullying.
- The school website is not updated daily and is not a source for daily information. Compass and Konnective are preferred.

Parents and Friends Association (PFA):

- The PFA president will provide a weekly update in the newsletter.
- Upcoming PFA meetings are advertised via Konnective, with new members most welcome at any time of the year.
- PFA can be contacted via email: PMPSparentsandfriends@gmail.com
- Further information for the PFA can be found on the PMPS website: <http://www.portmelb.vic.edu.au/parent-info/parents-and-friends/>

School Council:

- The School Council is made up of 12 members: 4 staff and 8 parent representatives
- The School Council is responsible for the overall functioning of the school. It is not responsible for day to day operations of the school, including staffing decisions (other than Principal appointments).
- Contact details for all School Councillors can be found on the PMPS website: <http://www.portmelb.vic.edu.au/about/school-council/>

Parent Representatives:

- Each class or double has a volunteer parent rep, determined at the beginning of each year
- Parent reps send weekly email communications and organise social events, maximum 1 per term.
- Attend 2 meetings per term with school leadership to better support home/school communication

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle

This policy was last ratified by School Council in.....

Appendix A:

| WHO | ABOUT | FOR EXAMPLE... | HOW |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <p>Class Teacher</p> | <p>Your child’s learning progress or social, behavioural or emotional issues.</p> <p>Important: It is not appropriate to raise an issue face-to-face during school hours as this does not allow the teacher to give you their full attention or pay due consideration to the issue.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Absences * Volunteering in the classroom * Positive feedback * Playground issues * Homework, including at-home reading * Not wanting to go to school * Queries about excursions and class events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Email (via Compass) * Written note * Phone message via the office * Face-to-face meeting (Contact teacher prior, giving sufficient time to arrange a mutually suitable time and for teacher to gather relevant data or observations) <p>Response time - Most routine communication acknowledged within 2 school days. More complex issues requiring investigation and consultation may take up to 5 school days.</p> |
| <p>Year Level Coordinator</p> | <p>Your child’s learning progress or social, behavioural or emotional issues, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You see the issue as a year-level-wide concern, • Students from several classes are involved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Playground or bullying issues across classes * Positive feedback for the team * Clarification about curriculum/learning units * Inconsistent messages/expectations from teachers across the team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Email * Written note * Face-to-face meeting (Possibly also involving your child’s teacher) * Phone message via the office <p>Response time - Acknowledged within 2 school days with proposed further steps, if necessary.</p> |
| <p>Assistant Principal/s</p> | <p>Your child’s learning progress or social, behavioural or emotional issues , if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You feel you have unsuccessfully tried other channels • *The issue is school-wide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complex student issues * Bullying/ Cyber bullying * Major curriculum issues * Student wellbeing (eg. Psychology or speech pathology, integration aides) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Email * Written letter * Phone call *If necessary, arrange a meeting <p>Response time - 1-3 school days depending on urgency and complexity</p> |

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| Principal | <p>Your child's learning progress or social, behavioural or emotional issues , if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You feel you have unsuccessfully tried other channels • The issue is school-wide • The issue is serious or confidential in nature | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School policy * School safety issues * Very complex, serious or confidential matters * School management issues * School staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Email * Written letter * Phone call * If necessary, arrange a meeting <p>Response time - 1-3 school days depending on urgency and complexity</p> |
| School Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School-wide issues <p>Important: School Council is not responsible for any teacher-specific matters such as employment, nor does it discuss individual issues between teachers, parents and students as these are the responsibility of the Principal.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Grounds and safety, including buildings and environment and OHS * School communication and community engagement * Finance and budgets * Outsourced programs, including Before and After School Care, school lunch orders and uniform providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Email * Written letter to School Council President or School Council members <p>Response time - Timing will be in line with the next monthly School Council meeting</p> |
| (PFA) Parent's and Friend's Association | <p>Questions or comments regarding PFA and PFA functioning, community/ parent engagement and fundraising</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fundraising * Social events * Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discussion, email or phone call with PFA Executive <p>Response time - Timing will be in line with next monthly PFA meeting, however urgent issues will be addressed asap</p> |
| School Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * School administration issues * The School Office is often the first point of contact for parents and they'll happily assist in filtering and channelling requests, feedback, questions and concerns to the right people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * OHS, including immediate repair works * School fees and payments * Arranging meetings with AP/Principal * Urgent messages for staff or students * General school-related questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Phone call or email (preferred) * Face-to-face <p>Response time - The School Office gets extremely busy, particular before and after school, and staff make every attempt to promptly assist visitors, however phone or email contact is preferred. Staff will attempt to assist you immediately or asap.</p> |